



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
Richard M. Flynn, Commissioner

Division of Fire Safety
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
J. William Degnan, State Fire Marshal

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release
Tuesday, November 22, 2005

Contact: Bill Degnan
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N.H. FIRE MARSHAL URGES CARE IN HOLIDAY COOKING

CONCORD, N.H. – New Hampshire State Fire Marshal J. William Degnan cautions holiday cooks to be careful in preparing holiday meals to guard against the danger of home fires.

“Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home fire injuries in this country and unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires,” Degnan said. “In recent years there have been more than 92,000 home structure fires involving cooking equipment annually, resulting in more than 330 deaths, 4,100 injuries and property damage totaling more than \$611 million.”

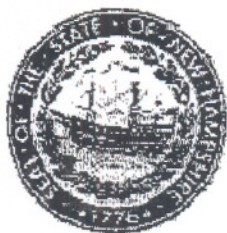
Degnan said there have been 10 fire-related fatalities in New Hampshire from all types of fires thus far this year. There were 11 fire deaths in 2004.

Degnan offered the following safety tips for holiday cooking:

- ❑ Always use cooking equipment labeled and approved by a recognized testing facility.
- ❑ Never leave cooking food on the stovetop unattended, and keep a close eye on food cooking inside the oven.
- ❑ Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles, such as potholders, towels, rags, drapes and food packaging.
- ❑ Keep children and pets away from cooking areas by creating a three-foot “kid-free zone” around the stove.
- ❑ Turn pot handles inward so they can’t be bumped and children can’t grab them.
- ❑ Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.
- ❑ Never use a wet oven mitt, as it presents a scald hazard if the moisture in the mitt is heated.
- ❑ Always keep an oven mitt and lid handy. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, put on the oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don’t remove the lid until it is completely cool. Never pour water on a grease fire and never discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray or shoot burning grease around the kitchen, actually spreading the fire.

(MORE)

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- ❑ If there is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you or catching your clothing on fire.
- ❑ If there is a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave. Call the fire department and make sure to have the oven serviced before you use it again. Food cooked in a microwave can be dangerously hot. Remove the lids or other coverings from microwaved food carefully to prevent steam burns.

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